

## ABSTRACT

**DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT:** Community Violence Exposure and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Support and Faith among Children and Adolescents in Inner-city Jamaica

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The present study utilized the ecological-transactional theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1983; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993) as a theoretical framework for examining the relationship between Community Violence Exposure (CVE) and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among Jamaican inner-city children and adolescents. Social support and spirituality/religiosity were proposed as potential mediating factors. Based on the empirical and theoretical literature, two competing models were designed and tested, *a priori*. In the primary model, CVE was proposed to directly impact PTSD both directly and indirectly through social support and spirituality/religiosity. The alternate model tested the full mediational effect of social support and spirituality/religiosity on the relationship between CVE and PTSD. It was hypothesized that the primary model would adequately fit the data. Structural equation modeling was used to assess the fit of the two models to the data for the present study. Results indicated a poor fit for both the primary and the alternate model. However, post hoc model modification yielded

adequate fit with the removal of social support from the model. Theoretical, research, and practice implications are discussed in relation to these findings, as well as methodological limitations and directions for future research. The study concluded that spirituality/religiosity has the potential to protect Jamaican inner-city children and adolescents from the consequences of CVE.